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AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BY

**NICHOLAS BIDDLE, LL.D.**

**AT PRINCETON, N. J.**

**SEPTEMBER 30, 1835.**

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**AN ADDRESS,**  
**DELIVERED**  
**BEFORE THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**  
**OF**  
**NASSAU-HALL,**  
**ON THE DAY OF THE**  
**ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT**  
**OF THE COLLEGE,**  
**SEPTEMBER 30, 1835.**

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**BY NICHOLAS BIDDLE, LL. D.**

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**PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE ASSOCIATION.**

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PRINCETON, September 30th, 1835.

N. BIDDLE, Esq.

Sir,—We are instructed by the Alumni Association of Nassau Hall to present to you their thanks for the very impressive and eloquent Address which you delivered before them this day, and to request from you a copy for publication. We feel great pleasure in communicating to you this expression of their gratification, and would indulge the hope that you will add to their obligations by a compliance with their request.

With great respect,

JARED D. FYLER,  
JOHN MACLEAN, } Committee.  
ALBERT B. DOD, }

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PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 22d, 1835.

GENTLEMEN,—

I send in compliance with your request a copy of the address. The only regret which accompanies it is, that I had not leisure to make it shorter and worthier.

With great respect,

Yours,

N. BIDDLE.

Messrs J. D. FYLER,  
JOHN MACLEAN, } Committee.  
ALBERT B. DOD, }



## ADDRESS.

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MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN,

*Alumni of Nassau-Hall—*

WE have come, my friends, to revisit together the scene of our early studies. Since last we parted here, time and distance have widely separated us:—the world and the world's cares have engrossed us;—death with no sparing hand has been amongst us,—but we have at length returned, probably for the last time, to mingle our remembrances of the living and our regrets over the departed. At such an hour what can I say to you which your own hearts have not anticipated? We stand here—on this narrow strait which separates the long past from the brief futurity which awaits us—a feeble group, the wreck of so many argosies that spread their young and venturous sails on the wide ocean of life, freighted with light hearts, too early overclouded—and buoyant hopes too soon quenched beneath its waves. How often as the storms of life assailed them, would they gladly have turned for shelter to this quiet haven which they left so impatiently, as the prisoned eagle, who chafes his breast against the bars, which keep him from the green fields and the gay flowers of spring, would, as the clouds of winter gather round him, take refuge in the solitary nest which his young hopes deserted.

It is our more fortunate lot to come back at last to that seclusion;—our early years are recalled by the presence of scenes endeared by a crowd of gentle associations,—we seem

to bathe our hearts in the clear and cool fountains of our boyhood, whose calm bosom has never yet been dimmed by the tears of sorrow, nor clouded by the hand of misfortune. But in thus communing, the thoughts that rise unbidden, are full of salutary sadness. How to live and how to die—to live without wrong and to die without fear, is the great lesson of our moral nature, without which all learning is fruitless and all knowledge unavailing—and if that lesson be best taught by displaying the transitory and uncertain character of all the world can give or take away; with what intensity are these convictions inspired here, where the memory alone is the great teacher and our personal experience rises to the dignity of wisdom. For myself, the most solemn impressions of my life are stamped by the scene before us. It has been my lot to be not an unmoved observer of many scenes and persons whose fate best illustrates the nothingness of human existence; but none have ever sunk upon my heart with a deeper feeling than this return to the intellectual home of our boyhood.

I do remember in my youth to have lived at Delphos, perhaps the noblest monument of the ancient world—the awful mother of wide spread religions—deemed to share with the Divinity its knowledge of the future—the mistress of human destiny, whom nations propitiated with their offerings—enriched by accumulated arts and treasures to which antiquity had no parallel. What is Delphos now? Its magnificent temples lie in ruins—the inscriptions which record its glory are defaced—its oracles are dumb; the suppliant crowd that brought up the votive offerings of nations is dispersed, and amidst the fragments of that religion which overshadowed the world, under a miserable shed, is raised the feeble chant of a



christian hymn, itself half suppressed lest it might offend some barbarian soldier of Mahomet. A few fragments of marble, the shapeless relics of a wall—some prostrate columns, are all that represent the buried glories of Sparta, of Corinth, or Argos; while of Leuctra and Mantinea and Chæroneæ—names that for ages have stirred up heroic passions in human bosoms, just enough remains to attest their existence. These are melancholy pictures of the decay of nations.

I do remember too, to have stood by the great master-spirit of our age on the day when he was crowned Emperor. There was that day gathered round him all that could fill the ambition or gratify the heart of a human being. Conqueror in so many fields, while his glory was yet unstained, all the trophies that war can give were at his feet. He had used them nobly, for he brought peace and prosperity to his country, which now seemed in its gratitude, to bestow upon him, not merely its honors, but that fatal gift, its freedom. He was surrounded by kinsmen to whom he gave thrones—by warriors who had followed him through so many battles to this his last triumph,—by 'all Europe that seemed to contribute or consent, to his elevation. And then the outward magnificence—the decorations—the pomps—all shed the enchantment of the senses over that great spectacle. It seemed as if fortune had gathered all her gifts merely to scatter them—as, if in scorn of human destiny, of all this splendor, the great object should be the first victim. A few short years and I strove to reassemble this pageant. Vain! That venerable pontiff, the chief of the Catholic religion, who had come from Rome to bestow on him the crown of Charlemagne, was now despoiled of his own kingdom and imprisoned by him,—that wife, the sharer of his

humbler fortunes, and this day the partner of his throne, was divorced by him, and her place filled by a stranger—his kinsmen were all dethroned and banished or executed—the soldiers who had sworn allegiance, betrayed and deserted him—and he, the loftiest and proudest of them all, twice dethroned, twice exiled, perished alone in a wretched island, six thousand miles from the scene of his dominion and his glory. That is the great moral lesson of our age.

Yet these examples of the decay of nations and the uncertain fate of those who govern them, have a weaker hold on our sympathy than those changes which affect our own personal existence. It is now thirty-four years since the voice you now hear, sounded for the last time within these walls. Thirty-four years! nearly half the period allotted to man's most prolonged existence. A whole generation of men has passed away. The infancy of that day has ripened into manhood—the mature life of that day has sunk into decrepitude—its old age has long since gone. We come back here unremembered and unknown; new forms meet our eyes,—voices no longer familiar salute us;—we ask for those we knew and are answered by their descendants. From this living solitude, we take refuge in our recollections, and strive to people the present with the past. We recall the anniversaries which marked our own entrance into the world—our companions radiant with their own young happiness at leaping over the barrier of their seclusion, and the gay crowd that thronged to share their pleasures. There was the father, who came to witness the honors of his son, the promise only, as he fondly deemed, of the greater distinctions that awaited him,—there was the mother, who wept with an anxious joy at the triumph

of that child whom she had nursed in her own bosom—there was the sister whose young heart swelled at the applause which followed her own dear playmate. The father, the mother, and the sisters are all gone. We walk through these halls, and pronounce the name of our companions. It was once echoed back by some shout of youthful merriment. But no answer comes now. We look into the chambers, round every one of which some fond association dwells. The beds are there just as they were wont to be, but they who once leaped from them to greet us, lie in lowlier beds, where we shall soon join them, and from which there is but one, the final, waking. These are the things that bring home to us our own absolute nothingness. They make us pause and ponder on that which in the tumult of life is too often forgotten—that which, though no human eye has seen, is worth all that human eye has ever seen, the deep, and dark, and unfathomed mystery of the human soul. They make us look inward, too, for self-examination, and if that scrutiny may suggest many things which might have been better done, or more wisely left undone, we may rejoice in being spared to repair them. But if these thoughts are mournful, they bring with them at least one consoling assurance. These changes, this decay, are only in ourselves—they have not touched our country. One generation has passed away, another has succeeded—but nature is ever the same bounteous mother. The fields are as green, the harvests as abundant—and our country, blest with a thousand advantages—blessed above all with free institutions, has outstripped even the wildest dreams our imagination had pictured for her. Our own institution has had its full share in the general advancement. We see it with increased and

increasing resources—with an enlarged and distinguished body of Professors—a more numerous train of students—with all the evidences of great and growing prosperity.

But we must not sadden, with personal themes like these, the parting hour of our young friends, who are about to do as we once did,—with joyous spirits exchange their seclusion for the active duties of the world. At such a moment, the experience of those who have gone before them, may not be wholly useless—and I will venture, therefore, to address to them a few words not inappropriate now, and which may not perhaps be altogether forgotten hereafter.

You have this day finished your education—you must now begin your studies. This education will have been unavailing, if it has not taught that although much is done, much remains to be done. The taste for letters is yours, the capacity to acquire knowledge is yours,—and your minds, prepared by discipline and instruction, have received the seeds of all useful learning. But the harvest they may yield depends wholly on yourselves. If these rich possessions be neglected, they will run to waste and destruction, leaving you the melancholy examples of an abortive effort at improvement. But care and cultivation will add largely to your present acquirements, and conduct you to any honors or distinctions to which you may aspire. To this you are often exhorted by those preceptors whose own success is the best testimony of the value of their instructions—but I cannot do you a greater service than by adding my own experience to their assurance, that liberal studies will be the safest guides and the truest friends in every condition, private or public, to which you may be destined.

You come on the stage of life at a peculiar period. For

more than half a century the world has been shaken by a great struggle between new ideas and old institutions. The mass of mankind have outgrown the restraints of their infancy, and are striving to adapt their governments to their opinions, while the great problem on the part of existing authorities, is how to yield gracefully, and seem to concede what may else be extorted. Whatever may be the result, the contest itself has developed an intense, and sometimes a dis-tempered, energy in the passions of men—and forced a wider diffusion of knowledge—a more universal education—a more alert and excited feeling among all conditions. Such a community requires in its leaders a corresponding power of intellect. They will not submit their rights, or liberties, or complicated interests to incompetent hands—and although sometimes misled by passion, their purpose is to give power to those only who have capacity to employ it usefully and safely. From you, therefore, destined as you naturally are to be prominent in your native communities, more is expected—more will be exacted—and your only hope of distinction is, to be in advance of those whom you aspire to lead. You must go on, or you must go down; and you can go on only by diligent perseverance in your studies, so as to withstand the heated competition around you. They are more valuable now, from their power to counteract the influence of mere physical wants, which is the tendency of our age. The wonders of mechanical improvement have so surprised the world, and so multiplied its physical pleasures, that we sometimes incline to exaggerate their value. The personal comforts which they furnish, have tended to unspiritualize the understanding, and make us prone to disparage more intellectual pursuits, which yield no such

luxurious enjoyments. But so long as the heart and the imagination most influence human actions—so long as mind predominates over matter—that is, while our race endures, the nature of man—his passions, his history, and his destiny will ever be the noblest study of a human being. In every walk of life you will find their advantages. You can engage in no pursuit where they will not ensure a superiority over less instructed competitors. In those deemed exclusively mechanical, they excite to experiment, they suggest improvements, they render labor more intelligent, and, therefore, more productive. Even the most monotonous routine of mechanical life leaves many hours to the dominion of solitary reflection, which early instruction might kindle into usefulness. They are more necessary in our country, because labor has attached to it here two peculiarities, almost unknown elsewhere—power and leisure—political power, which education can alone render valuable—and leisure, the natural result of the general prosperity—but the most dangerous gift to an uncultivated mind.

There are some who fear that these studies may inspire a distaste for industry, and that the fields and workshops may be abandoned, because they who work can also read. But men need not hate labor because they love study—nor look above their profession, because they can look beyond it. The industry of any community may be safely trusted to the actual wants which make it necessary, and the spirit of accumulation which makes it afterwards agreeable—and the only effect will be, not to make men work less, but to make that work more skilful. Pass through the other occupations of life, and cultivation maintains its ascendancy. Men are commonly more intelligent in their affairs, generally more successful, always

more respected, for habits of taste and literary cultivation. As you ascend in the scale of life, their efficacy is still more striking. In the sacred calling, among those who are equal in the essentials of Christian virtue, how much more of honor and of usefulness is the portion of that scholar whose learning enables him to trace back to its source the stream of revelation, separating from its pure waters the turbid infusion which the imperfection of human language, or the misguided zeal of fanatics may have mingled with it. In the healing art, what resources for alleviating human suffering and prolonging the existence of those we love, may be employed by him who renders every age and every climate tributary to his improvement. In the kindred profession of the law, which embraces the whole circle of human affairs, the highest honors are reserved, not for him who is content with the ordinary routine of litigation, but for the riper scholar who seeks in every science—in all liberal arts, and throughout the whole domain of letters, whatever may adorn or dignify his noble occupation. But it is on the wider field of usefulness, for which every American should be prepared, that these studies are of the highest value. You are all destined for public life. Many of you will, I trust, be conspicuous there. I deem it right, then, earnestly to impress on you the influence of liberal studies on public duties, by explaining my own conviction, that inattention to them is a prevailing defect among us—that one of the greatest dangers to our institutions arises from the want of them—and that, without them, no public man can ever acquire extended usefulness or durable fame.

In our country, too many young men rush into the arena of public life without adequate preparation. They go abroad

because their home is cheerless. They fill their minds with the vulgar excitement of what they call politics, for the want of more genial stimulants within. Unable to sustain the rivalry of more disciplined intellects, they soon retire in disgust and mortification, or what is far worse, persevere after distinctions which they can now obtain only by artifice. They accordingly take refuge in leagues and factions—they rejoice in stratagems—they glory in combinations,—weapons all these, by which mediocrity revenges itself on the uncalculating manliness of genius—and mines its way to power. Their knowledge of themselves inspires a low estimate of others. They distrust the judgment and the intelligence of the community, on whose passions alone they rely for advancement—and their only study is to watch the shifting currents of popular prejudice, and be ready at a moment's warning to follow them. For this purpose, their theory is, to have no principles and to give no opinions, never to do any thing so marked as to be inconsistent with doing the direct reverse—and never to say any thing not capable of contradictory explanations. They are thus disencumbered for the race—and as the ancient mathematician could have moved the world if he had had a place to stand on, they are sure of success if they have only room to turn. Accordingly, they worship cunning, which is only the counterfeit of wisdom, and deem themselves sagacious only because they are selfish. They believe that all generous sentiments of love of country, for which they feel no sympathy in their own breasts, are hollow pretences in others—that public life is a game in which success depends on dexterity—and that all government is a mere struggle for place. They thus disarm ambition of



its only fascination, the desire of authority in order to benefit the country; since they do not seek places to obtain power, but power to obtain places. Such persons may rise to great official stations—for high offices are like the tops of the pyramids, which reptiles can reach as well as eagles. But though they may gain places, they never can gain honors—they may be politicians—they never can become statesmen. "The mystery of their success lies in their adroit management of our own weakness—just as the credulity of his audience makes half the juggler's skill. Personally and singly, objects of indifference, our collected merits are devoutly adored when we acquire the name of "the people." Our sovereignty, our virtues, our talents, are the daily themes of eulogy: they assure us that we are the best and wisest of the human race—that their highest glory is to be the instruments of our pleasure, and that they will never act nor think nor speak but as we direct them. If we name them to executive stations, they promise to execute only what we desire—if we send them to deliberative bodies, they engage never to deliberate, but be guided solely by the light of our intuitive wisdom. Startled at first by language, which, when addressed to other sovereigns, we are accustomed to ridicule for its abject sycophancy, constant repetition makes it less incredible. By degrees, although we may not believe all the praise, we cannot doubt the praiser, till at last we become so spoiled by adulation, that truth is unwelcome. If it comes from a stranger, it must be prejudice—if from a native, scarce less than treason; and when some unhappy traveller ventures to smile at follies which we will not see or dare not acknowledge, instead of disregarding it, or being amused by it, or profiting by it, we

resent it as an indignity to our sovereign perfections. This childish sensitiveness would be only ludicrous if it did not expose us to the seduction of those who flatter us only till they are able to betray us—as men praise what they mean to sell—treating us like pagan idols, caressed till we have granted away our power—and then scourged for our impotence. Their pursuit of place has alienated them from the walks of honest industry—their anxiety for the public fortunes has dissipated their own. With nothing left either in their minds or means to retreat upon; having no self-esteem, and losing that of others, when they cease to possess authority, they acquire a servile love of sunshine—a dread of being what is called unpopular, that makes them the ready instruments of any chief who promises to be the strongest. They degenerate at last into mere demagogues, wandering about the political common, without a principle or a dollar, and anxious to dispose to the highest bidder of their only remaining possession, their popularity. If successful, they grow giddy with the frequent turns by which they rose, and wither into obscurity. If they miscalculate—if they fall into that fatal error—a minority—retirement, which is synonymous with disgrace, awaits them, while their more fortunate rivals, after flourishing for a season in a gaudy and feverish notoriety, are eclipsed by some fresher demagogue, some more popular man of the people. Such is the melancholy history of many persons, victims of an abortive ambition, whom more cultivation might have rendered useful and honorable citizens.

Above this crowd and beyond them all stands that character which I trust many of you will become—a real American statesman.

For the high and holy duty of serving his country, he begins by deep and solitary studies of its constitution and laws, and all its great interests. These studies are extended over the whole circumference of knowledge—all the depths and shoals of the human passions are sounded to acquire the mastery over them. The solid structure is then strengthened and embellished by familiarity with ancient and modern languages—with history, which supplies the treasures of old experience—with eloquence, which gives them attraction—and with the whole of that wide miscellaneous literature, which spreads over them all a perpetual freshness and variety. These acquirements are sometimes reproached by the ignorant as being pedantry. They would be pedantic if they intruded into public affairs inappropriately, but in subordination to the settled habits of the individual, they add grace to the strength of his general character, as the foliage ornaments the fruit that ripens beneath it. They are again denounced as weakening the force of native talent, and contrasted disparagingly with what are called rough and strong minded men. But roughness is no necessary attendant on strength; the true steel is not weakened by the highest polish—just as the scymetar of Damascus, more flexible in the hands of its master, inflicts a keener wound than the coarsest blade. So far from impairing the native strength of the mind, at every moment this knowledge is available. In the play of human interests and passions, the same causes ever influence the same results; what has been, will again be, and there is no contingency of affairs on which the history of the past may not shed its warning light on the future. The modern languages bring him into immediate contact with the living science and the gifted minds

of his remote cotemporaries. All the forms of literature, which are but the varied modifications in which the human intellect develops itself, contribute to reveal to him its structure and its passions—and these endowments can be displayed in a statesman's career only by eloquence—itself a master power, attained only by cultivation, and never more requiring it than now, when its influence is endangered by its abuse. Our institutions require and create a multitude of public speakers and writers—but, without culture, their very numbers impede their excellence—as the wild richness of the soil throws out an unweeded and rank luxuriance. Accordingly, in all that we say or write about public affairs, a crude abundance is the disease of our American style. On the commonest topic of business, a speech swells into a declamation—an official statement grows to a dissertation. A discourse about any thing must contain every thing. We will take nothing for granted. We must commence at the very commencement. An ejectionment for ten acres, reproduces the whole discovery of America—a discussion about a tariff or a turnpike, summons from their remotest caves the adverse blasts of windy rhetoric—and on those great Serbonian bogs, known in political geography as constitutional questions, our ambitious fluency often begins with the general deluge, and ends with its own. It is thus that even the good sense and reason of some become wearisome, while the undisciplined fancy of others wanders into all the extravagances and the gaudy phraseology which distinguish our western orientalism. The result is, that our public affairs are in danger of becoming wholly unintelligible—concealed rather than explained, as they often are, in long harangues which few who can escape will hear, and in massive documents which all

who see will shun. For this idle waste of words—at once a political evil and a social wrong—the only remedy is study. The last degree of refinement is simplicity; the highest eloquence is the plainest; the most effective style is the pure, severe and vigorous manner, of which the great masters are the best teachers.

But the endearing charm of letters in a statesman, is the calmness and dignity which they diffuse over his whole thoughts and character. He feels that there are higher pursuits than the struggles for place. He knows that he has other enjoyments. They assist his public duties—they recruit his exhausted powers, and they fill, with a calm and genuine satisfaction, those hours of repose so irksome to the mere man of politics. Above all, and what is worth all, they make him more thoroughly and perfectly independent. It is this spirit of personal independence which is the great safeguard of our institutions. It seems to be the law of our physical and of our moral nature, that every thing should perish in its own excesses. The peculiar merit of free institutions is, that they embody and enforce the public sentiment—the abuse which has destroyed them is, that they execute prematurely, the crude opinions of masses of men without adequate reflection, and before the passions which excited them can subside. Opinions now are so easily accumulated in masses, and their action is so immediate, that unless their first impulses are resisted, they will not brook even the restraints which, in cooler moments, they have imposed on themselves, but break over the barriers of their own laws. Their impatience is quickened by the constant adulation from the competitors for their favor, till, at last, men become unwilling

to hazard offence by speaking wholesome truth. It is thus that the caprice of a single individual, some wild phantasy, perhaps, of some unworthy person, easily corrected, or, if there were need, easily subdued at first—when propagated over numerous minds, not more intelligent than the first, becomes, at length, commanding—and superior intellects are overawed by the imposing presence of a wide-spread folly, as the noxious vapor of the lowest marsh, may poison, by contagion, a thousand free hills. That is our first danger. The second and far greater peril is, when these excited masses are wielded by temporary favorites, who lead them against the constitution and the laws. For both these dangers, the only security for freedom is found in the personal independence of public men. This independence is not a mere abundance of fortune, which makes place unnecessary—for wealth is no security for personal uprightness—but it is the independence of mind, the result of talents and education, which makes the possessor conscious that he relies on himself alone—that he seeks no station by unworthy means—will receive none with humiliation—will retain none with dishonor. They take their stand accordingly. Their true position is that where they can best defend the country equally from this inflamed populace and their unworthy leaders—on the one hand, resisting this fatal weakness—the fear of losing popular favor—and, on the other, disdaining all humiliating compliances with men in power.

Of the ancient and modern world, the best model of the union of the man of letters and the statesman was he, with whose writings your studies have made you familiar—Cicero. The most diligent researches, the most various acquirements,

prepared him for the active career of public life, which he mingled with laborious studies, so as never, for a moment, to diminish the vigor of his public character. How often, and how well he served his country all history attests. When the arts and the arms of Cataline had nearly destroyed the freedom of Rome, it was this great man of letters who threw himself into the midst of that band of desperate conspirators, and by his single intrepidity and eloquence rescued the republic.

When that more noble and dangerous criminal, Cæsar, broke down the public liberty, after vainly striving to resist the tide of infatuation, Cicero retired to his farm, where he composed those deep philosophical works which have been the admiration of all succeeding time. But they could not avert his heart from his country—and on that day—on that very hour when the dagger of Casca avenged the freedom of Rome, he was in the Senate, and the first words of Brutus on raising his bloody steel, were to call on Cicero—the noblest homage, this, which patriotism ever paid to letters.

Let it not diminish your admiration that Cicero was proscribed and put to death. They who live for their country must be prepared to die for it. For the same reason, hatred to those who enslaved his country, his great predecessor, Demosthenes, shared a similar fate. But both died in their country's service—and their great memories shall endure for ever, long after the loftiest structures of the proudest sovereigns. There were kings in Egypt who piled up enormous monuments with the vain hope of immortality. Their follies have survived their history. No man can tell who built the pyramids. But the names of these great martyrs of human liberty have been in all succeeding time the trumpet call to freedom.

Each word which they have spoken is treasured, and has served to rally nations against their oppressors.

Trained by these studies and animated by the habitual contemplation of the examples of those who have gone before you, as a true American statesman, you may lay your hand on your country's altar. From that hour—swerved by no sinister purpose, swayed by no selfish motive—your whole heart must be devoted to her happiness and her glory. No country could be worthier of a statesman's care. On none has nature lavished more of the materials of happiness and of greatness—as fatal if they are misdirected, as they must be glorious when rightly used. On the American statesman, then, devolves the solemn charge of sustaining its institutions against temporary excesses, either of the people or their rulers—and protecting them from their greatest foes—which will always lie in their own bosom. You can accomplish this only by persevering in your own independence—by doing your duty fearlessly to the country. If you fail to please her, do not the less serve her, for she is not the less your country. Never flatter the people—leave that to those who mean to betray them. Remember that the man who gave the most luxurious entertainments to the Roman people, was the same who immediately after destroyed their freedom. That was Julius Cæsar. Remember that the most bloody tyrant of our age was the meanest in his courtship to the mob, and scarcely ever spoke without invoking for his atrocities what he called “the poor people.” That man was Robespierre. Never let any action of your life be influenced by the desire of obtaining popular applause at the expense of your own sincere and manly convictions. No favor from any sovereign—a single individual, or thirteen millions, can console



you for the loss of your own esteem. If they are offended, trust to their returning reason to do you justice, and should that hope fail, where you cannot serve with honor, you can retire with dignity. You did not seek power—and you can readily leave it, since you are qualified for retirement, and since you carry into it the proud consolation of having done your duty.

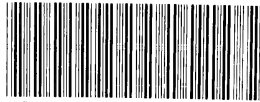
But should you ever be called to act the stern, yet glorious part which these patriot statesmen performed, you will not fail in the requisite energy. It may be, that, not as of old, another robust barbarian from Thrace, like Maximin—not a new gladiator slave, like Spartacus—but some frontier Cataline may come up with the insolent ambition to command you and your children. More dangerous still, the people may be bartered away as other sovereigns have been, by faithless favorites, just as the very guards at Rome sold the empire at open auction to the highest bidder, Julian. The same arts which succeeded of old, may not be unavailing here—a conspiracy of profligate men, pandering to the passions of the people, may inflame them to their ruin—and the country, betrayed into the hands of its worst citizens, may be enslaved with all the appearances of freedom. Should that day come, remember never to capitulate—never to compromise—never to yield to the country's enemies. Remember that crime is not the less guilty—it is only the more dangerous by success. If you should see the cause betrayed by those who ought to defend it, be you only the more faithful. Never desert the country—never despond over its fortunes. Confront its betrayers, as madmen are made to quail beneath the stern gaze of fearless reason. They will denounce you. Disregard their outcries—

it is only the scream of the vultures whom you scare from their prey. They will seek to destroy you. Rejoice that your country's enemies are yours. You can never fall more worthily than in defending her from her own degenerate children. If overborne by this tumult, and the cause seems hopeless, continue self-sustained and self-possessed. Retire to your fields, but look beyond them. Nourish your spirits with meditation on the mighty dead who have saved their country. From your own quiet elevation, watch calmly this servile route as its triumph sweeps before you. The avenging hour will at last come. It cannot be that our free nation can long endure the vulgar dominion of ignorance and profligacy. You will live to see the laws re-established—these banditti will be scourged back to their caverns—the penitentiary will reclaim its fugitives in office, and the only remembrance which history will preserve of them, is the energy with which you resisted and defeated them.

My last words then to you, my young friends, are to pursue the studies which you have successfully begun. You may always confide in them as the ornaments of prosperity—the consolation of adverse fortune—your support in public life—your refuge in retirement—giving to the private citizen his most refined enjoyments, and to the statesman, independence and distinction.



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